H. Access to Records

(18) Resolution by Maharashtra State Archives

"Resolved that the Central and State Governments may be requested to throw open records relating to persons and parties involved in the political movements during pre-Independence days, which are in the custody of the Central Intelligence Bureau and the State Police Departments of Criminal Investigation, for the use of research scholars".

Explanatory note:

Sources for history of freedom movement in India are amply available. They mainly form correspondence and diaries of individuals who had taken active part in the freedom struggle. It is, however, learnt that the records referred to in the resolution are not made available to scholars under the pretext of secrecy. Reports contained in these records are precise and describe in minute details the events of that period and the part played by the eminent persons. The procedure prescribed by Police Department prohibits others to have access to these records. After 25 years of independence it is not desirable to treat these records still confidential. Even the Ministries of the Central and State Governments have complied with the request of the Indian Historical Records Commission in regard to confidential records in their custody and handed them to the National or State Archives for preservation. To allow to continue these records in the custody of Central Intelligence Bureau and Criminal Investigation Department with restrictions regarding access is to deprive students of history from valuable and authentic source material.

Standing Committee's views:

Earlier an attempt was made by the National Archives of India to obtain the records of the Intelligence Bureau, but the Bureau did not agree to transfer their old intelligence papers. It may, however, be possible to consult these records in connection with the publication of documents pertaining to Transfer of Power and Partition (the scheme has been renamed "Towards Freedom"), on which work has already been started by the National Archives of India. The recently promulgated Archival Policy Resolution also bears on the question of access to records, follow up action can be taken accordingly.

(19) Resolution by Dr. Durgaprasad Bhattacharya

"Resolved that the Government of India be requested to permit use of historical maps available at National Archives of India (and elsewhere) especially in the records of the Survey of India with minimum restrictions and without causing delay and harrasment. All publications of maps are subject to the approval of the Government of India and as such there appears to be no reason, except in very few special cases, to refuse to supply microfilm copies of maps to scholars without any unnecessary delay. In spite of restrictions imposed on scholars in India, such maps are being used by scholars outside from the India Office Library".

Standing Committee's views:

Due to the existing rules some delay in getting clearance for certain maps of which copies are required by the scholars, is inevitable. If the Commission so desires, the authorities could be approached for reviewing the same.